The Taylor MS.

PREFACE.

THE discovery of **The Taylor MS.** brings another important accession to the now considerable number of the documents known to be extant, venerable by age, bearing on the ANCIENT CHARGES AND CONSTITUTIONS of the Craft, and the Lodge has now pleasure in introducing to the notice of its members and the Fraternity generally, not only a faithful and full-sized facsimile of a portion of the original (accompanied by typographical reproduction of the text), but also a valuable and interesting disquisition thereon by the world-wide known veteran writer and authority on Masonic MSS., Bro. William James Hughan.

Bro. Hughan has edited by far the greater proportion of the known MSS., and I esteem it a great privilege to be associated with him (as in a number of other instances in former years) in the editing and publishing of the *Taylor MS.*, and take the opportunity, now afforded, of expressing the deep obligations I am under to Bro. Hughan for his unwearying kindness, help, and encouragement during my forty years pursuit of Masonic knowledge.

In his report on the *Taylor MS.* Bro. Hughan refers to the deplorable—and I may add barbarous—mutilation of the Scroll.

Fortunately the text is inscribed on *both* sides of the parchment, and not, as often happens to be the case in these MSS., on one side only. We have thus preserved to us the "Articles and Orders" which Bro. Hughan has noticed with his usual masterly grasp of the entire subject. Nevertheless the absence of an important portion of the Scroll is most regrettable and vexatious.

Very little is known so far of the history of the MS. It was formerly in the possession of the late Thomas Taylor, Esq., sometime Coroner of the West Riding of Yorkshire and the Honor of Pontefract. He was a man of considerable attainments as an Antiquary and the author of "The History of the Rectory Manor of Wakefield." After his death the Scroll came into the possession of John Charlesworth, Esq., of Horbury, near Wakefield.

Mr. Taylor died some years ago, and was not known to be a Mason, but his father, Bro. Thomas Taylor, was initiated into Freemasonry in the old Lodge of *Unanimity* No. 154 Wakefield, June 4th, 1821. He does not appear to have taken any active part in the Craft. Wakefield being an old Masonic centre, possibly the MS. may have been handed down for generations back in that city, but this is merely conjectural at present.

I may mention, by the way, that the *Unanimity* is one of those lodges of the "Moderns" which, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, gave the Royal Arch Degree on its own authority to brethren who applied for Exaltation.

The existence of the *Taylor MS.* was first made known to me by Bro. H. G. E. Green, Prov. Grand Secretary of West Yorkshire, and Bro. W. Townend, P.M., Lodge of *Unanimity* No. 154. On my communicating with Mr. Charlesworth through these brethren, and commenting on its interesting character archæologically, he very kindly

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gave me permission and ample opportunity to have the MS. examined. Mr. Charlesworth, unfortunately for the Craft, is not a member of our Fraternity, as he possesses an extensive range of knowledge on the subject of old manuscripts, but on hearing that this document would be held in high estimation by the Craft he most generously presented it to the Provincial Grand Lodge of West Yorkshire, in whose possession it will remain in perpetuity, and by whom it will be most carefully preserved and greatly valued.

The Province of West Yorkshire may be congratulated on possessing ten of these precious ancient Masonic MSS., viz., the *Thos. W. Tew* 17th Century, *William Watson* 1687, *Clapham* 1700 (circa), *Waistell* 1693, *Hughan* 17th Century, *Stanley* 1677, *T. W. Embleton* 17th Century, *Mac Nab* 1722, *H. F. Beaumont* 1690 (or ante), *Taylor* 17th Century. In addition to these there are in private holding the *Probity*, early 18th Century (*Probity* Lodge No. 61, Halifax); the *Hope* 17th Century (*Hope* Lodge No. 302, Bradford); and the *Bain* 17th Century, owned by Bro. Reginald A. Wilson, of *Fidelity* Lodge No. 289, Leeds, the last-named MS. having been recently published in the Third Part of the Transactions of our *Quatuor Coronati* Lodge No. 2076 for the year 1907.

WILLIAM WATSON.

COMMENTARY.

The "Taylor MS." belongs to the "Sloane Family," and so I have numbered it E 19, placing it with the *new* "Thorp Branch (A)" necessitated by the discovery of the "John T. Thorp MS. (E 16)" of A.D. 1629. The latter MS. was reproduced in the *Transactions* of the "Lodge of Research," 1898-9, and in the "Ars Quatuor Coronatorum," vol. xi., 1898. Had it been found earlier, I have no doubt but that Dr. Begemann would have placed the MSS. of this group under the "Thorp Family," rather than the "Sloane E"; being the senior by several years, and evidently a prototype of the "Sloane MS. No. 3848"; two documents being used in the transcribing of the "Sloane" Scroll.[1]

It is impossible to decide how long this Roll was originally, but only a third is preserved, if the usual "Charges" or Regulations were given on the obverse, but if these were omitted about half is missing. The Scroll leaves off while reciting that a Parliament was convened to consider the pressing claims of a superabundant population. The "Alnwick MS." gives the Charges, general and special, though the "Orders" (somewhat similar in character) are likewise inserted, so it is quite probable the "Taylor MS." also did, and thus is only now represented by about one-third of its former length. "The Alnwick MS., E 10," was reproduced at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, by the Province of Northumberland and Durham, *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia*, A.D. 1895.

After the MS. proper, in the "Alnwick Lodge" Records, come the "Orders to be observed by the company and Fellowship of Free Masons att a Lodge held att Alnwick Septr 29, 1701, being the Genll head meeting day." They are numbered one to fourteen, and signed by the members. In like manner the "Articles and Orders, Condescended, Concluded & agreed vpon by ye Company & Fellowship of Freemasons" follow the regular portion of the Taylor MS., only these additional rules are written on the

[1] Hughan's "Old Charges of British Freemasons 1895," and the "Supplement 1896-1906" (*Freemason*, June 16th, 1906).

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reverse of the Scroll, which in this respect differs from all other MSS. known. Owing to the regrettable maiming of the MS., these Articles shared the fate of the regular Roll, the twelfth and a part of the thirteenth being fortunately preserved.

In the "Masonic Magazine" for August and September, 1875, is an interesting article by the Editor, on the "Minute Book" of the Lodge of Industry, Gateshead. Our lamented member, Bro. the Rev. A. F. A. Woodford, M.A., was the author. Some time since I had the pleasure of examining this valuable "Book of Constitutions, A.D. 1723," with the additional sheets on which the oldest preserved Records of the Lodge are written. They well deserve reproduction in facsimile, so that their character may be more widely known. The ordinary Regulations for operatives, which follow the traditional History of the "Old Charges," are styled "*Orders of Antiquity*," and run from one to twenty-one, and there are also the "*Apprentices Orders*," followed by the "General Orders" and "Penal Orders," the last two agreeing in several respects with the "Articles and Orders" of the "Taylor MS.," and those of the "Alnwick MS." In order to exhibit their substantial agreement, I append a table of the articles in the three MSS. which are mostly alike.

"Taylor MS."		"Alnwick MS."		"Gateshead MS."	
	1		1	(*General*)	1
(*Master Mason*)	2	(*Master*)	2	(*Penal*)	3
	3		9		?
	4		?		?
	5		3		?
	6		4	(*General*)	5
	7 & 8		5 & 6	(*Penal*)	4 & 5
	9		?	,,	6
	10		7	,,	1
	11		8	,,	2
(*Enlarged*)	12		9	(*General*)	3
	13		10	(*Penal*)	2

Some of the laws are to be found in other portions of the MSS., but they are all suggestive of a common origin. The General Meeting Day was either on the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel ("*Taylor*" and "*Alnwick*" MSS.) or St. John the Baptist's Day ("*Gateshead*" MS.), the "Taylor" Scroll alone providing that an apprentice not observing its conditions "*shall be defrauded of his Freedome.*" It is much to be regretted that we know not the name and location of the Lodge which used the "Taylor MS.", but doubtless it was of a similar character to the other two Lodges, held at Alnwick and Gateshead respectively.

A paper of great interest on "The Alnwick Lodge Minutes" was read by Bro. W. H. Rylands, F.S.A., on the 4th January, 1901 (*A.Q.C.*, vol. xiv., pp. 4-26), in which mention is made that the Rules which immediately follow the copy of the "Old Charges are different from those usually found in other MSS., but some of them are modelled upon the original ones." Bro. Rylands, in studying these Records, discovered that on December 27th, 1748, the Minutes probably refer to the formation of a *speculative* Lodge, separate from the one mainly, if not wholly, operative; which as our lamented Brother G. W. Speth pointed out, was of importance "as bearing on the transition period of the Craft."

The old Charter of "Scoon and Perth Lodge" of A.D. 1658 should also be consulted as to these additional Regulations or By-Laws; full information being given in

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the History of that venerable Atelier by the Historian of Perth, Bro. D. Crawford Smith (*Cowan & Co.*, Perth, 1898), a work of considerable value and importance.

For additional information as to the "Taylor" version, the reader is referred to the interesting Preface by my esteemed Collaborator, Bro. William Watson, who has secured the Scroll for the Library of West Yorkshire for which he has done so much from its inauguration to the present time.

W. J. Hughan.

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1 * * * **mighty the ffather of heaven** with the wisdom of his glorious sone through the goodneſs of the holy Ghoſt three perſons in one Godhead be with vs at our begining and give vs grace Soe to governe in oure Liveing y^t^ wee may come to His Bliſs y^t^ never ſhall have ending Amen.

Good Brethren and ffellowes our purpose is to tell you how and in what manner this Craft of Maſonry was begun & afterwards how it was ffounded by worthy Emperours and princes & many other worſhipfull men & alſoe to them y^t^ be here wee will declare them.

The Charge that doth belong to every true Maſon to keep, for in good faith
10 if you take heed thereto, it is well worthy to be kept for a worthy Craft & a Curious Science for there be Seaven liberall Sciences of the which it is one of them they be these followeing firſt is **Gramer** that teacheth a man to Speake truely & to write truely the Second is **Rethorick** that teacheth a man to Speake fair and in Subtill Termes, the third is **Logick** that teacheth to deſerne truth from falſhood, the fourth is **Arithmatick** that teacheth to Reckon & number all manner of Numbers the ffifth is Called **Geometry** and it teacheth to Mett & Meaſure ye Earth and other things of which Science is Maſonry the Sixth is Called **Muſick** that teacheth the Craft of Song Organs and Harpe the Seaventh
20 is Called **Aſtronomy** that teacheth to know ye Courſe of the Sun & Moon & other Ornaments of the heavens

Thee seaven liberall Sciences ye which be all by one Science y^t^ is to Say Geometry thus may a man prove y^t^ all ye Sciences in ye World are found by Geometry for it teacheth Mett & Meaſure ponderacon & weight of all manner of kindes of the earth And there is noe man y^t^ worketh by any Craft but he worketh by Some Meaſure nor noe man y^t^ buyes & Sells but by Meaſure and weight & all this is Geometry And Craftsmen and Merchants finde noe other of the Seavene Sciences & Eſpecially Plowmen & Tillers of all manner of graine both Corne ſeeds
30 Vines plants Sellers of all other fruite, for Gramer neither Aſtronomy nor none of all theſe Cann find a man one Meaſure or Mett without Geometry wherefor I thinke that Science is moſt worth y^t^ findeth out all other

Now this worthy Science firſt begun I ſhall tell you, before Noyes flood there was a man Called Lameck as it is written in ye fourth Chapter of Geneſis and this Lameck had two wifes ye one was Called Ada & ye other Sella by ye firſt wife Ada he begott two Sones ye one was Called Jabell & ye other Juball and by ye other wife he had one Sone & a daughter &

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theſe ffour Childer found the begining of all Crafts in ye world this Juball
40 was the Elder Son & he found the Craft of Geometry & he parted fflockes
as of Sheep & Lambes in ye feilds & first wrought houſe of Stone & tree
as it is noted in the Chapter above ſaid And his Brother Jubell found
Muſick of Songs Organ & Harpe the third Brother found out Smithes
Craft to worke Iron and Steell and there Siſter found out the Art of weaveing
theſe Children did know y^t God would take Vengeance for Sin either by
fire or water wherefor the writt theſe Sciences which they had found in
Two Pillers of Stone y^t they might be found after ye fflood ye one Stone
was Called Marble y^t Cannot burne with fire ye other was Called
Laturns y^t Cannot drowne in ye water our Intent is to tell you truely
50 In what manner theſe Stones were found y^t ye Craftes were written in
Greek HARMERIVES y^t was Son unto Chuſs & Chuſs Sone unto Sem

Which was Son unto Noye the ſaid HARMERIVES was afterwards Called
Hermes ye father of Wiſdome & found out the two Pillers of Stone and
ye Sciences written therein & taught them forth & at the makeing of the
Tower of Babilon there was the Craft of Maſonry firſt found & made
much of and the king of Babilon y^t was Called HEMBROTH was a
Maſon & loved well ye Craft & is Soe reported of by Maſters of the
Storyes and when ye Citty of Ninevy & other Cittyes of Eaſt Aſia ſhould
be made HEMBROTH ye king of Babilon ſent thither Sixty Maſons
60 at the deſire of the king of Ninevy his Coſen & when they went forth
he gave them a Charge in this manner **That they** should Serve ye Lord
Truely for his payment Soe he might have worſhipp for Sending them
to him & other Charges he gave them & this was ye Firſt time y^t any Maſon
had any Charge of his Craft MOREOVER when Abraham & Sarah
his wife went into Egypt & there taught ye Seaven Liberall Sciences
to ye Egyptians & he had a worthy Schollar Called Euclid & learned
right well & was Maſter of all ye Seaven Liberall Sciences and in his
dayes it befell y^t ye Lords & Eſtates of that Realme had Soe many Sones
that they had begotten Some by theire wives & some by other Ladyes
70 of that Realme for y^t Land is whole Laid & a repleniſhed generacon
and they had not Liveing Competent for theire Children wherefor they
made much Sorrow and ye King of that Land Aſsembled a great
Councell att a Parliament to know how he might theire Children
& they Could finde noe good way & Cauſed a Crye to be made through
the Realme . . . . . .

(*Conclusion of the obverse side of the remnant of the MS.*)

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Articles and Orders Condeſcended concluded & agreed upon by ye Company & ffellowſhipp of ffreemaſons

1 **Imprimis** It is agreed amongſt the s^d ffellowſhipp y^t there ſhall be yearely two Wardens Choſen upon ye day of the feaſt of St. John ye 27th day of December which two ſhall be elected & appointed by the moſt Conſent of ye fellowſhip

2 **Item** that y^e ſ^d two Wardens shall Leavy & receive all ſuch ffines & penaltyes as ſhall in any wiſe be amongſt the ſaid ffellowſhip & ſhall render & yeild a Juſt Account at the yeare end of all ſuch ffines & receipts as ſhall Come unto their hands or oftner if the Maſter Maſon & ye Company Liſt to Call them — 01 : 00 : 00

3 **Item** that there ſhall noe Maſon take Apprentice except he hath been Seaven yeares a ffree Maſon it is agreed with the Company paying for ſuch offenſes — 03 : 06 : 08

4 **Item** That there ſhall noe Maſon except the Maſter Maſon take any more Apprentices but every Seaven yeares one that as ye firſt hath Served Six yeares that then it ſhall be Lawfull for him or them to take an other to enter before the former yeare be expired & if any offend to ye Contrary to pay ye ffine of — 02 : 00 : 00

5 **Item** that noe Maſon ſhall take any worke by taſke or by day other then the Kings Maties Worke but he ſhall make at the Leaſt three or ffour of his ffellowes Acquainted therewith for to take his parte payeing for every ſuch offence ye Sume of ... ... — 03 : 06 : 08

6 **Item** that noe Maſon ſhall take noe worke y^t any of his ffellowes is in hand with all payeing for every ſuch offence the Sume of ... ... — 01 : 06 : 08

7 **Item** that noe Maſon ſhall take any Apprentice but he ſhall enter him within fforty dayes & ſoe for to pay for his entring ... ... — 00 : 00 : 06

8 **Item** that the Apprentice ſhall have his Charge given him for which if the Maſter doe omitt to pay for the ſame the ſume of ... ... — 00 : 03 : 04

9 **Item** If he doe not Shew his Indenture to be Recorded in the Regiſter booke within one quarter of a yeare in ſoe offending ſhall pay for every ſuch offence ... ... — 00 : 06 : 08

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10 **Item** That every Maſon when he is Warned by the Warden or other of the Company & ſhall not Come to the place accuſtomed & appointed except he have a reaſonable Cauſe to ſhew the wardens to the Contrary if not ſoe doeing ſhall pay	00 : 06 : 08
11 **Item** that noe Maſon ſhall Thou his ffellow or give him the Lye in reproachfull manner within the accuſtomed place of meeting upon paine to pay for every ſuch offence	00 : 03 : 04
12 **Item** that there ſhall noe Apprentice after he hath Served yeare be admitted or Accepted but upon the feaſt day of St. Michaell the Arch Angell being the Generall meeting day & that he ſhall pay Six ſhillings eight pence to the Company all other Dutyes at ye diſcretion of ye Maſter and ffellowes	00 : 06 : 08
13 **And** the ſaid Apprentice in not ſoe doeing ſhall be defrauded of his ffreedome	
14 **Item** That if any Maſon either in the place of meeting or at worke amongſt his ffellowes	

(The remainder of the MS. has been cut off.)

Transcribed by me from the original document in the possession of the Provincial Grand Lodge of West Yorkshire.

WILLIAM WATSON.

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